

MINUTES

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

Date: 23 September 2020

Venue: Virtual

Present: David Clarke (Chair)
James Norton (Member)
Dr Susan Tranter (Member)
Owen Vallis (Member)
Brian Tytherleigh (Member)

In attendance: Anne Longfield, Children’s Commissioner
Janette Threapleton, Head of Business Services
Tom Clarke, Head of Data Science
Seb Groth, Engagement Director - NAO
Stuart Frith, Senior Manager – Mazars
Chris Rising, Internal Audit Director – Macintyre Hudson
Louise Moore, DfE Sponsor Team

Apologies: Alice Miles, Director of Strategy and Policy
Haroon Chowdry, Director of Evidence

Board Secretariat: Karen Bryant

Summary of discussion	
1.	Welcome and Introductions
	The Chair welcomed members and attendees.
2.	Declaration of Interests
	No new additions
3.	Draft Minutes of 18 June 2020, Summary of Actions and Matters Arising
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 th June 2020, were approved. Action: None Action Log: All actions to date are now complete. Matters Arising: None.

4.	<p>Children's Commissioner's Report</p>
	<p>The Commissioner informed the Committee that the recent period had been very busy, with a strong focus on schools re-opening. A key report on early years, published in July, was well received. Reports on mental health, children in care and digital are due for publication over coming months.</p> <p>We are submitting evidence and challenge with regards to the Government spending review with a focus on vulnerable kids. The Commissioner reiterated her commitment to continue meaningful discussion, maintain strong networks and build relationships with officials and people in Government to effect change for vulnerable children.</p> <p>Members discussed the Commissioner's profile and the legacy that has been created during her tenure, and commended her for the manner in which the organisation has brought these issues forward. Public statements continue to be strategically considered with regard to impact and relationships.</p> <p>Action: None</p>
5.	<p>Recruitment Update: Commissioner 2021 - 2027</p>
	<p>Louise Moore reported that recruitment for the new Commissioner is on track and that the Department is confident that they have a strong field of candidates.</p> <p>Members reiterated their previous concern that the timeline for appointment does not factor sufficient time for due diligence processes, make allowance for the possibility of a longer notice period, or the risk that this poses to the organisation. The Chair expressed disappointment that more information on the recruitment had not been provided to the Committee and requested assurance that the timetable will be met.</p> <p>Actions: Louise Moore to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feedback to the Department's sponsor team and provide further assurance that the recruitment timeline will be achieved. 2) Confirm date of the candidate's pre-appointment attendance at Select Committee. 3) Confirm date of planned preferred candidate announcement.
6.	<p>Recruitment Update: New ARC Members</p>
	<p>Janette Threapleton brought Members up to date with progress on the recruitment for of two Audit and Risk Committee members. The application window closes on 30th September with a range of applications having been already received.</p> <p>Action: None</p>

7.	Internal Audit – Audit Assignment Update
	<p>Chris Rising reported that dates for the full annual internal audit programme have now been confirmed.</p> <p>The first audit assignment on transition to the new Commissioner has been completed. No significant issues were found, and two minor observations have been made. The final report will come to the November meeting.</p> <p>Janette Threapleton commented that this is the auditor's first assignment since appointment, and although the service has so far been delivered entirely remotely due to Covid-19, information sharing and engagement has worked very well and no concerns were anticipated for the upcoming audits.</p> <p>Action: None</p>
8.	CHLDRN :Vulnerability Dashboard Demonstration
	<p>Tom Clarke presented the Vulnerability index to the group and explained how stakeholders can engage with the data on the tool to understand the national picture of childhood vulnerability, and quickly compile local profiles.</p> <p>The Chair said that he was impressed by the tool and suggested that the National Audit Office (NAO) would find a demonstration of interest. Seb Groth agreed.</p> <p>Action: Seb Groth to progress the Vulnerability Dashboard demonstration within NAO.</p>
9.	Risk Management and Assurance Framework Q1 review
	<p>Janette Threapleton presented the current Risk Register and the Assurance Framework review for Q1.</p> <p>Susan Tranter highlighted the need to adequately resource the regular maintenance and updating of the dashboard to ensure the validity of the data and proposed that this be added to the risk register.</p> <p>Action: Haroon Chowdry to add maintenance of the Vulnerability Dashboard to the risk register.</p>
10.	Budget and Management Accounts update
	<p>Janette Threapleton summarised the budget review and management accounts for August.</p> <p>The Chair commented that the level of output is strong for the budget.</p> <p>Action: None</p>
11.	<p>AOB: For information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Review of Policies and Procedures (b) OCC Tailored Review Implementation Plan Verbal Update (c) NAO Value for Money update - June 2020 (d) NAO Value for Money update - September 2020

	<p>(a) The Review of Policies and Procedures received praise for being a useful document and good practice.</p> <p>(b) Members noted that all actions in the Tailored Review Implementation Plan have been completed.</p> <p>The Chair expressed fulsome appreciation to Dr Susan Tranter and thanked her for her commitment and contribution during her service to the Committee.</p>
--	--

Future meeting dates	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wednesday 25 November 2020• Wednesday 24 February 2021• Wednesday 19 May 2021• Wednesday 23 June 2021 (Remuneration Committee)• Wednesday 22 September 2021